VIEWS AND REVIEWS

SRI AUROBINDO

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PART ONE

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I

What is the Synthesis needed at the present time?

Undoubtedly, that of man himself. The harmony of his faculties is the condition of his peace, their mutual understanding and helpfulness the means of his perfection. At war, they distract the kingdom of his being; the victory of one at the expense of another maims his self-fulfilment.

The peculiar character of our age is the divorce that has been pronounced between reason and faith, the logical mind and the intuitive heart. At first, the declaration of war between them was attended by painful struggles, a faith disturbed or a scepticism dissatisfied. But now their divorce has created exaggerated tendencies which impoverish human life by their mutual exclusiveness, on the one side a negative and destructive critical spirit, on the other an imaginative senti-

ment which opposes pure instinct and a faith founded on dreams to the sterile fanaticism of the intellect.

Yet a real divorce is impossible. Science could not move a step without faith and intuition and today it is growing full of dreams. Religion could not stand for a moment if it did not support itself by the intellectual presentation, however inadequate, of profound truths. Today we see it borrowing many of its weapons from the armoury of its opponent. But a right synthesis in virtue of a higher and reconciling truth can alone dissipate their mutual misunderstandings and restore to the race its integral self-development.

The synthesis then of religious aspiration and scientific faculty, as a beginning; and in the resultant progress an integrality also of the inner existence. Love and knowledge, the delight of the Bhakta and the divine science of the knower of Brahman, have to effect their unity; and both have to recover the fullness of Life which they tend to banish from them in the austerity of their

search or the rapture of their ecstasy.

The heart and the mind are one universal Deity and neither a mind without a heart nor a heart without a mind is the human ideal. Nor is any perfection sound and real unless it is also fruitful. The integral divine harmony within, but as its result a changed earth and a nobler and happier humanity.

II

What is the significance of the name, "Arya"?

The question has been put from more than one point of view. To most European readers the name* figuring on our cover is likely to be a hieroglyph which attracts or repels according to the temperament. Indians know the word, but it has lost for them the significance which it bore to their forefathers. Western Philology has converted it into a racial term, an unknown ethnological quantity on which different speculations fix different values. Now, even among the philologists, some are beginning to recognise that the word in its original use expressed not a difference of race, but a difference of culture. For in the Veda the Aryan peoples are those who had accepted a particular type of self-culture, of inward and outward practice, of ideality, of aspiration. The Aryan gods

* Referring to the Word "Arya" written in Devanagari characters.

were the supraphysical powers who assisted the mortal in his struggle towards the nature of the godhead. All the highest aspirations of the early human race, its noblest religious temper, its most idealistic velleities of thought are summed up in this single vocable.

In later times, the word Arya expressed a particular ethical and social ideal, an ideal of well-governed life, candour, courtesy, nobility, straight dealing, courage, gentleness, purity, humanity, compassion, protection of the weak, liberality, observance of social duty, eagerness for knowledge, respect for the wise and learned, the social accomplishments It was the combined ideal of the Brahmana and the Kshatriya. Everything that departed from this ideal, everything that tended towards the ignoble, mean, obscure, rude, cruel or false, was termed un-Aryan. There is no word in human speech that has a nobler history.

In the early days of comparative Philology, when the scholars sought in the history of words for the prehistoric history of peo-

ples, it was supposed that the word Arya came from the root *Ar*, to plough, and that the Vedic Aryans were so called when they separated from their kin in the north-west who despised the pursuits of agriculture and remained shepherds and hunters. This ingenious speculation has little or nothing to support it. But in a sense we may accept the derivation. Whoever cultivates the field that the Supreme Spirit has made for him, his earth of plenty within and without, does not leave it barren or allow it to run to seed, but labours to exact from it its full yield, is by that effort an Aryan.

If Arya were a purely racial term, a more probable derivation would be *Ar*, meaning strength or valour, from *ar* to fight, whence we have the name of the Greek war-god Ares, *areios*, brave or warlike, perhaps even *arete*, virtue, signifying, like the Latin *virtus*, first, physical strength and courage and then moral force and elevation. This sense of the word also we may accept. "We fight to win sublime Wisdom, therefore men call us warriors." For Wisdom implies the

choice as well as the knowledge of that which is best, noblest, most luminous, most divine. Certainly, it means also the knowledge of all things and charity and reverence for all things, even the most apparently mean, ugly or dark, for the sake of the universal Deity who chooses to dwell equally in all. But, also, the law of right action is a choice, the preference of that which expresses the godhead to that which conceals it. And the choice entails a battle, a stuggle. It is not easily made, it is not easily enforced.

Whoever makes that choice, whoever seeks to climb from level to level up the hill of the divine, fearing nothing, deterred by no retardation or defeat, shrinking from no vastness because it is too vast for his intelligence, no height because it is too high for his spirit, no greatness because it is too great for his force and courage, he is the Aryan, the divine fighter and victor, the noble man, *aristos*, best, the *śreṣṭha* of the Gita.

Intrinsically, in its most fundamental sense, Arya means an effort or an uprising and overcoming. The Aryan is he who strives

and overcomes all outside him and within him that stands opposed to the human advance. Self-conquest is the first law of his nature. He overcomes earth and the body and does not consent like ordinary men to their dullness, inertia, dead routine and tamasic limitations. He overcomes life and its energies and refuses to be dominated by their hungers and cravings or enslaved by their rajasic passions. He overcomes the mind and its habits, he does not live in a shell of ignorance, inherited prejudices, customary ideas, pleasant opinions, but knows how to seek and choose, to be large and flexible in intelligence even as he is firm and strong in his will. For in everything he seeks truth, in everything right, in everything height and freedom.

Self-perfection is the aim of his self-conquest. Therefore what he conquers he does not destroy, but ennobles and fulfils. He knows that the body, life and mind are given him in order to attain to something higher than they; therefore they must be transcended and overcome, their limitations denied,

the absorption of their gratifications rejected. But he knows also that the Highest is something which is no nullity in the world, but increasingly expresses itself here,—a divine Will, Consciousness, Love, Beatitude which pours itself out, when found, through the terms of the lower life on the finder and on all in his environment that is capable of receiving it. Of that he is the servant, lover and seeker. When it is attained, he pours it forth in work, love, joy and knowledge upon mankind. For always the Aryan is a worker and warrior. He spares himself no labour of mind or body whether to seek the Highest or to serve it. He avoids no difficulty, he accepts no cessation from fatigue. Always he fights for the coming of that kingdom within himself and in the world.

The Aryan perfected is the Arhat. There is a transcendent Consciousness which surpasses the universe and of which all these worlds are only a side-issue and a by-play. To that consciousness he aspires and attains. There is a Consciousness which, being transcendent, is yet the universe and all that the

universe contains. Into that consciousness he enlarges his limited ego; he becomes one with all beings and all inanimate objects in a single self-awareness, love, delight, all-embracing energy. There is a consciousness which, being both transcendental and universal, yet accepts the apparent limitations of individuality for work, for various standpoints of knowledge, for the play of the Lord with His creations; for the ego is there that it may finally convert itself into a free centre of the divine work and the divine play. That consciousness too he has sufficient love, joy and knowledge to accept; he is puissant enough to effect that conversion. To embrace individuality after transcending it is the last and divine sacrifice. The perfect Arhat is he who is able to live simultaneously in all these three apparent states of existence, elevate the lower into the higher, receive the higher into the lower, so that he may represent perfectly in the symbols of the world that with which he is identified in all parts of his being,—the triple and triune Brahman.

III

What exactly is meant by meditation in Yoga? And what should be its objects?

The difficulty our correspondent finds is in an apparent conflict of authorities, as sometimes meditation is recommended in the form of a concentrated succession of thoughts on a single subject, sometimes in the exclusive concentration of the mind on a single image, word or idea, a fixed contemplation rather than meditation. The choice between these two methods and others, for there are others, depends on the object we have in view in Yoga.

The thinking mind is the one instrument we possess at present by which we can arrive at a conscious self-organisation of our internal existence. But in most men thought is a confused drift of ideas, sensations and impressions which arrange themselves as best they can under the stress of a succession of immediate interests aud utilities. In accordance

with the general method of Nature much is used as waste material and only a small portion selected for definite and abiding formations. And as in physical Nature, so here the whole process is governed by laws which we rather suffer than use or control.

The concentration of thought is used by the Rajayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of mind, just as the processes of governed respiration and fixed posture are used by the Hathayogins to gain freedom and control over the workings of the body and the vital functions.

By meditation we correct the restless wandering of the mind and train it like an athlete to economise all its energies and fix them on the attainment of some desirable knowledge or self-discipline. This is done normally by men in ordinary life, but Yoga takes this higher working of Nature and carries it to its full possibilities. It takes note of the fact that by fixing the mind luminously on a single object of thought, we awaken a response in general Consciousness which proceeds to satisfy the mind by pouring into

it knowledge about that object or even reveals to us its central or its essential truth. We awaken also a response of Power which gives us in various ways an increasing mastery over the workings of that on which we meditate or enables us to create it and make it active in ourselves. Thus by fixing the mind on the idea of Divine Love, we can come to the knowledge of that principle and its workings, put ourselves into communion with it, create it in ourselves and impose its law on the heart and the senses.

In Yoga concentration is used also for another object,—to retire from the waking state, which is a limited and superficial condition of our consciousness, into the depths of our being measured by various states of Samadhi. For this process contemplation of the single object, idea or name is more powerful than the succession of concentrated thoughts. The latter, however, is capable, by bringing us into indirect but waking communion with the deeper states of being, of preparing an integral Samadhi. Its characteristic utility, however, is the luminous

activity of formative thought brought under the control of the Purusha by which the rest of the consciousness is governed, filled with higher and wider ideas, changed rapidly into the mould of those ideas and so perfected. Other and greater utilities lie beyond, but they belong to a later stage of self-development.

In the Yoga of Devotion, both processes are equally used to concentrate the whole being or to saturate the whole nature with thoughts of the object of devotion, its forms, its essence, its attributes and the joys of adoration and union. Thought is then made the servant of Love, a preparer of Beatitude. In the Yoga of knowledge meditation is similarly used for discrimination of the True from the apparent, the Self from its forms, and concentrated contemplation for communion and entry of the individual consciousness into the Brahman.

An integral Yoga would harmonise all these aims. It would have also at its disposal other processes for the utilisation of thought and the mastery of the mind.

IV

"I have encountered in my life several examples of people living or trying to live in the universal consciousness and it seemed to me that it rendered them less compassionate, less humane, less tender to the sufferings of others. It seems to me that if it is necessary not to remain in the individual consciousness when it is a question of our own sufferings, it is otherwise when it is a question of sympathising with the sufferings of others. In my opinion we feel more keenly the troubles of our brothers in humanity if we remain in the individual consciousness. But I may be mistaken and ask only to be enlightened by you on this point."

Is it certain that such people are living in the universal consciousness? or, if they are, is it certain that they are really less humane and compassionate? May they not be exercising their humanity in another fashion than the obvious and external signs

of sympathy and tenderness?

If a man is really insensible to the experiences of others in the world, he is not living in the full universal consciousness. Either he has shut himself up in an experience of an individual peace and self-content, or he is absorbed by his contact with some universal principle in its abstract form without regard to its universal action, or he is living inwardly apart from the universe in touch with something transcendent of world-experience. All these states are useful to the soul in its progress, but they are not the universal consciousness.

When a man lives in the cosmic self, he necessarily embraces the life of the world and his attitude towards that world struggling upward from the egoistic state must be one of compassion, of love or of helpfulness. The Buddhists held that immersion in the infinite non-ego was in itself an immersion in a sea of infinite compassion. The liberated Sannyasin is described in the Gita and in other Hindu books as one whose occupation is beneficence to all creatures. But this vast spirit of

beneficence does not necessarily exercise itself by the outward forms of emotional sympathy or active charity. We must not bind down all natures or all states of the divine consciousness in man to the one form of helpfulness which seems to us the most attractive, the most beautiful or the most beneficent. There is a higher sympathy than that of the easily touched emotions, a greater beneficence than that of an obvious utility to particular individuals in their particular sufferings.

The egoistic consciousness passes through many stages in its emotional expansion. At first it is bound within itself, callous therefore to the experiences of others. Afterwards it is sympathetic only with those who are identified in some measure with itself, indifferent to the indifferent, malignant to the hostile. When it overcomes this respect for persons, it is ready for the reception of the altruistic principle.

But even charity and altruism are often essentially egoistic in their immediate motive. They are stirred by the discomfort of the sight of suffering to the nervous system or by the

pleasurableness of others' appreciation of our kindliness or by the egoistic self-appreciation of our own benevolence or by the need of indulgence in sympathy. There are philanthropists who would be troubled if the poor were not always with us, for they would then have no field for their charity.

We begin to enter into the universal consciousness when, apart from all individual motive and necessity, by the mere fact of unity of our being with all others, their joy becomes our joy, their suffering our suffering. But we must not mistake this for the highest condition. After a time we are no longer overcome by any suffering, our own or others', but are merely touched and respond in helpfulness. And there is yet another state in which the subjection to suffering is impossible to us because we live in the Beatitude, but this does not deter us from love and beneficence,—any more than it is necessary for a mother to weep or be overcome by the little childish griefs and troubles of her children in order to love, understand and soothe.

Nor is detailed sympathy and alleviation

of particular sufferings the only help that can be given to men. To cut down branches of a man's tree of suffering is good, but they grow again; to aid him to remove its roots is a still more divine helpfulness. The gift of joy, peace or perfection is a greater giving than the effusion of an individual benevolence and sympathy and it is the most royal outcome of unity with others in the universal consciousness.

PART TWO

REVIEWS

I

Hymns to the Goddess*

This is one of a series of publications by Mr. Arthur Avalon consisting of texts and translations of the Tantras. The hymns collected and translated in this volume are, however, taken from other sources besides the Tantras. Many of them are from the considerable body of devotional hymns attributed by tradition to the philosopher Shankaracharya, a few from the Mahabharata and the Puranas. Most are well-known *stotras* addressed to the various forms and names of the female Energy, Mother of the worlds, whose worship is an important part of that many-sided and synthetic whole which we call Hinduism.

The work of translation has been admirably done. The one slight defect is the preservation untranslated of Sanskrit

* Translated from the Sanskrit by Arthur and Ellen Avalon. (Luzac & Co., London.)

words other than names which might well have been rendered into English. The translation is at once faithful, simple and graceful in style and rhythm. No English version can reproduce the majesty of the Sanskrit rhythms and the colour and power of the original, but within the limits of the possible the work could hardly have been better executed.

The translation is accompanied by brief but numerous notes. Mr. Avalon has made a principle of submission to the authority of Hindu commentators and learned men whom he has consulted or taken as his guides in the study of the Tantra. He writes, "It is necessary to study the Hindu commentators and to seek the oral aid of those who possess the traditional interpretation of the Shastra. Without this and an understanding of what Hindu worship is and means, absurd mistakes are likely to be made. I have thus, in addition to such oral aid, availed myself of the commentaries of Nilakantha on the Mahabharata, of Gopala Chakravarti and Nagoji Bhatta on Chandi, and of Nilakantha on the

Devibhagavata. As regards the Tantra, the great Sadhana Shastra, nothing which is both of an understanding and accurate character can be achieved without a study of the original texts undertaken with the assistance of the Tantrik gurus and pundits who are the authorised custodians of its traditions." This careful scrupulousness is undoubtedly the right attitude for the work which Mr. Avalon has set himself,—to present to the English-reading public the philosophy and worship of the Tantra and the way of the Shaktas as they have been traditionally practised and understood in mediaeval and modern India. The method followed assures a sound basis free from the vagaries of learned ignorance and unfettered ingenuity which render so much of the work of European scholarship on Indian subjects fantastic, unsound and ephemeral. It cannot, we think, be the final attitude; an independent scrutiny of the ancient scriptures and forms of philosophy and religion is needed through the whole range of Indian thought and devotion both to recover their more ancient and original forms

and principles often concealed by later accretions and crystallisings and to separate from them whatever is of imperishable worth and utility for the spiritual future of mankind. But meanwhile, and especially when a great and difficult subject is being for the first time brought forward in an adequate manner to general notice, the conservative method is undoubtedly the most desirable.

Commentators, however, even the most learned, are subject to error, as Mr. Avalon has had to recognise in his translation of the verse which declares that all women without exception are forms of the Great Mother. The Commentator would have us believe that the phrase *striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalā jagatsu* means all women who possess the sixty-four arts and are devoted to their husbands, are modest, etc. The translator rightly rejects this conventional distortion of a great and profound philosophical truth; he translates "all women without exception throughout the world." We wonder whether the phrase does not admit of a different shade cutting deeper into the heart of things. The lines are,

Vidyāḥ samastāstava devi bhedāḥ
striyaḥ samastāḥ sakalā jagatsu.

Is there not a hint of a distinction between the simple *bhedāḥ* and *sakalāḥ*? "All sciences, O Goddess, are different parts of thee, all women entirely in the worlds." The sense would then be that wherever the feminine principle is found in the living personality, we have the entire presence of the world-supporting maternal soul of the Divinity. The Devi with all her aspects, *kalās*, is there in the Woman; in the Woman we have to see Durga, Annapurna, Tara, the Mahavidyas, and therefore it is said in the Tantra, in the line quoted by Mr. Avalon in his preface, "Wherever one sees the feet of Woman, one should give worship in one's soul even as to one's guru." Thus this thought of the Shakta side of Hinduism becomes an uncompromising declaration of the divinity of woman completing the Vedantic declaration of the concealed divinity in man which we are too apt to treat in practice as if it applied only in the masculine. We put away in

silence, even when we do not actually deny it, the perfect equality in difference of the double manifestation.

There are other instances in which the translators seem to us not to have escaped the misleading wiles of the commentator. We may instance the passage in the Hymn to Mahadevi in which the Goddess is described as being "both black and grey". "Smoke-coloured" would be a closer rendering of the epithet *dhūmra*. We are told in the note that it means "that which is with smoke, the sacrificial rite, here the knowledge of the rites". This is a scholastic interpretation which we cannot accept. The different hues of the Goddess are always psychologically symbolic and Mr. Avalon has himself an excellent passage to that effect in his Introduction. But, although occasionally provoking dissent, the notes are throughout interesting and instructive and often throw a new light on the implications of the text.

Mr. Avalon in his publications insists upon the greatness of the Tantra and seeks to clear away by a dispassionate statement of

the real facts the cloud of misconceptions which have obscured our view of this profound and powerful system. We shall have occasion to deal with this aspect of his work when we come to speak of the Mahanirvana Tantra. In this volume he justifies against European prejudice the attribution of the feminine form and quality to God and against modern ignorance generally the image-worship which the Tantra in common with other Hindu systems makes part of the first stage in religious progress. On both points we are in general agreement with his standpoint, though we do not hold that religious evolution must necessarily follow the line laid down by the Tantra.

Human conceptions of the Divine divide themselves first into the worship of the formed and the aspiration towards the formless, secondly, into the adoration of the Qualified and the urge of the rarest spirits towards the Unqualified, the Absolute. For all these stages the Tantric worship and discipline provides. How can the Formless invest Himself with form, asks the religious ration-

alist. The universe is there to reply. Hinduism worships Narayana in the stone, the tree, the animal, the human being. That which the intellectual and spiritual pride or severity of other religions scorns, it makes its pride and turns into its own form of logical severity. Stocks and stones, the quadruped and the human being, all these are equals in God, our brothers in the Divine, forms that the Omnipresent has not disdained to assume. But beyond the material forms there are others that are ideal and symbolic, but not less, if anything more real, more full of divine power than any actual physical manifestation. These are the mental images in which we worship God. The Hindu believes that to whatever form he brings his devotion, the love of God is bound to assume and vivify it, and we cannot say that the belief is irrational. For if there is a Consciousness in the universe and transcending it which answers to the yearning of all these creatures and perhaps itself yearns towards them with the love of the Father, the Mother, the Friend, the Lover, and a love sur-

passing all these, then it is idle to suppose that It would assume or create for its own pleasure and glory the forms of the universe, but would disdain as an offence to Its dignity or purity those which the love of the worshipper offers to It and which after all Itself has formed in his heart or his imagination. To these mental forms mental worship may be offered, and this is the higher way; or we may give the material foundation, the *pratiṣṭhā*, of a statue or pictured image to form a physical nodus for a physical act of worship.

In the formless also we worship God, in His qualities, in His Love, Power, Bliss, Wisdom, in the great cosmic Principles by which He manifests Himself to the eye of knowledge. We worship Him as the Impersonality manifested in these things or the Personality containing them. And we rise at the apex of the pinnacle into that which is not only formless, *arūpa*, but *nirguṇa*, qualityless, the indefinable, *anirdeśyam*, of the Gita. In our human ignorance, with our mental passion for degrees and distinctions, for su-

periorities and exclusions, we thus grade these things and say that this is superior, that is for ignorant and inferior souls. Do we know? The Theist looks down with reprobation on the form-adoring man-worshipping idolator and polytheist; the Adwaitin looks down with a calm and tolerant indulgence on the ignorance of the quality-adoring personality-bemused Theist. But it seems to us that God scorns nothing, that the Soul of all things may take as much delight in the prayer of a little child or the offerings of a flower or a leaf before a pictured image as in the philosopher's leap from the summit of thought into the indefinable and unknowable and that he does best who can rise and widen into the shoreless realisation and yet keep the heart of the little child and the capacity of the seer of forms.

At any rate, this is an attitude towards which these Hymns to the Goddess bring us very near. They are full of the glories of her form, her visible body; full of the thinker's perception of her in all the shapes of the universe; full of the power of her psycho-

logical aspects; pervaded too by a sense behind and often expressed of her final unity and transcendence. Mr. Avalon brings this out with great force and vividness in his Introduction. But it should be manifest even to a careless reader of the Hymns. Take the following passage:—

> Reverence to her who is eternal, Raudra,
> To Gauri and Dhatri, reverence and again reverence,
> To Her who is moonlight and in the form of the moon,
> To Her who is supreme bliss, reverence for ever.

This is from the famous hymn in the Chandi-Mahatmya, deservedly one of the best known in sacred literature; but everywhere we find the same crowding of different aspects. In a hymn of which the eleventh verse is a sensuous description of the physical goddess,—

> O Gauri! with all my heart
> I contemplate Thy form,
> Beauteous of face,
> With its weight of hanging hair,
> With full breasts and rounded slender waist,

Holding in three hands a rosary, a pitcher and book
And with thy fourth hand making the jnana-mudra,—

(mark how the close passes naturally into the psychological symbolism of the form), the ninth is a remarkable piece of Yogic imagery,–

O Mother! like the sleeping King of serpents
Residing in the centre of the first lotus,
Thou didst create the universe.
Thou dost ascend like a streak of lightning,
And attainest the ethereal region;—

and the opening is the highest philosophy expressed with great poetic force and interspersed with passages of the richest poetical colour.

The cause and thinker of the World,
She whose form is that of the shabdabrahman,
And whose substance is bliss.

Thou art the primordial One,
Mother of countless creatures,
Creatrix of the bodies of the Lotus-born, Vishnu and Shiva,

Who creates, preserves and destroys the worlds....
Although thou art the primordial cause of the world,
Yet art thou ever youthful.
Although thou art the Daughter of the Mountain-King,
Yet art thou full of tenderness.
Although thou art the Mother of the Vedas,
Yet they cannot describe Thee.
Although men must meditate upon Thee,
Yet cannot their mind comprehend Thee.

This hymn is quoted as culled from a Tantric compilation, the Tantrasara. Its opening is full of the supreme meaning of the great Devi symbol, its close is an entire self-abandonment to the adoration of the body of the Mother. This catholicity is typical of the whole Tantric system, which is in its aspiration one of the greatest attempts yet made to embrace the whole of God manifested and unmanifested in the adoration, self-discipline and knowledge of a single human soul.

II

South Indian Bronzes *

The discovery of Oriental Art by the aesthetic mind of Europe is one of the most significant intellectual phenomena of the times. It is one element of a general change which has been coming more and more rapidly over the mentality of the human race and promises to culminate in the century to which we belong. This change began with the discovery of Eastern thought and the revolt of Europe against the limitations of the Graeco-Roman and the Christian ideals which had for some centuries united in an uneasy combination to give a new form to her mentality and type of life. The change, whose real nature could not be distinguished so long as the field was occupied by the battle between Science and Religion, now

* By O. C. Gangoly. Published by the India Society of Oriental Arts, Calcutta. Sold by Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, and Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, London.

more and more reveals itself as an attempt of humanity to recover its lost soul. Long overlaid by the life of the intellect and the vital desires, distorted and blinded by a devout religious obscurantism the soul in humanity seems at last to be resurgent and insurgent. To desire to live, think, act, create from a greater depth in oneself, to know the Unknown, to express with sincerity all that is expressible of the Infinite, this is the trend of humanity's future. A philosophy, a literature, an Art, a society which shall correspond to that which is deepest and highest in man and realise something more than the satisfaction of the senses, the desire of the vital parts and the expediencies and efficiencies recognised by the intellect without excluding these necessary elements, these are the things humanity is turning to seek, though in the midst of a chaotic groping, uncertainty and confusion.

At such a juncture the value of Eastern Thought and Eastern Art to the world is altogether incalculable. For their greatness is that they have never yet fallen away from the ancient truth, the truth of the Soul; they

have not gone out of the Father's house to live on the husks of the sense and the life and the body; they have always seen in the mind and body only instruments for the expression of that which is deeper and greater than its instruments. Even intellect and emotion had for them only a secondary value. Not to imitate Nature but to reveal that which she has hidden, to find significative forms which shall embody for us what her too obvious and familiar symbols conceal, has been the aim of the greatest Art, the Art of prehistoric antiquity and of those countries and ages whose culture has been faithful to the original truth of the Spirit. Greek culture, on the other hand, deviated on a path which led away from this truth to the obvious and external reality of the senses. The Greeks sought to use the forms of Nature as they saw and observed them, slightly idealised, a little uplifted, with a reproduction of her best achievement and not, like modern realism, of her deformities and failures; and though they at first used this form to express an ideal, it was bound

in the end to turn to the simple service of the intellect and the senses. Mediaeval Art attempted to return to a deeper motive; but great as were its achievements, they dwelt in a certain dim obscurity, an unillumined mystery which contrasts strongly with the light of deeper knowledge that informs the artistic work of the East. We have now throughout the world a search, an attempt on various lines to discover some principle of significant form in Art which shall escape from the obvious and external and combine delight with profundity, the power of a more searching knowledge with the depth of suggestion, emotion and ecstasy which are the very breath of aesthetic creation. The search has led to many extravagances and cannot be said to have been as yet successful, but it may be regarded as a sure sign and precursor of a new and greater age of human achievement.

The Oriental Art recognised in Europe has been principally that of China and Japan. It is only recently that the aesthetic mind of the West has begun to open to the greatness

of Indian creation in this field or at least to those elements of it which are most characteristic and bear the stamp of the ancient spiritual greatness. Indian Architecture has indeed been always admired, but chiefly in the productions of the Indo-Saracenic school which in spite of their extraordinary delicacy and beauty have not the old-world greatness and power of the best Hindu, Jain and Buddhistic work. But Indian sculpture and painting have till recently been scouted as barbarous and inartistic, and for this reason that they have, more than any other Oriental work, deliberately remained in the extreme of the ancient symbolic conception of the plastic Arts and therefore most entirely offended the rational and imitative eye which is Europe's inheritance from the Hellene. It is a curious sign of the gulf between the two conceptions that a European writer will almost always fix for praise precisely on those Indian sculptures which are farthest away from the Indian tradition,—as for instance the somewhat vulgar productions of the Gandhara or bastard Graeco-Indian school or

certain statues which come nearest to a faithful imitation of natural forms but are void of inspiration and profound suggestion.

Recently, however, the efforts of Mr. Havell and the work of the new school of Indian artists have brought about or at least commenced something like a revolution in the aesthetic standpoint of Western critics. Competent minds have turned their attention to Indian work and assigned it a high place in the artistic creation of the East and even the average European writer has been partly compelled to understand that Indian statuary and Indian painting have canons of their own and cannot be judged either by a Hellenistic or a realistic standard. More salutary still, the mind of the educated Indian has received a useful shock and may perhaps now be lifted out of the hideous banality of unaesthetic taste into which it had fallen. Whatever benefits the laudable and well-meaning efforts of English educationists may have bestowed on this country, it is certain that, aided by the inrush of the vulgar, the mechanical and

the commonplace from the commercial West, they had succeeded in entirely vulgarising the aesthetic mind and soul of the Indian people. Its innate and instinctive artistic taste has disappeared; the eye and the aesthetic sense have not been so much corrupted as killed. What more flagrant sign of this debacle could there be than the fact that all educated India hailed the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, an incompetent imitation of the worst European styles, as the glory of a new dawn and that hideous and glaring reproductions of them still adorn its dwellings? A rebirth of Indian taste supporting a new Indian Art which shall inspire itself with the old spirit while seeking for fresh forms is now, however, possible and it is certainly a great desideratum for the future. For nothing can be more helpful towards the discovery of that which we are now vaguely seeking, a new Art which shall no longer labour to imitate Nature but strive rather to find fresh significant forms for the expression of the self.

It is necessary to this end that the wealth of their ancient Art should be brought

before the eyes of the people, and it is gratifying to find that an increasing amount of pioneer work is being done in this respect, although still all too scanty. The book before us, Mr. O. C. Gangoly's *South Indian Bronzes*, must rank as one of the best of them all. Southern India, less ravaged than the North by the invader and the Vandal and profiting by the historic displacement of the centre of Indian culture southward, teems with artistic treasures. Mr. Gangoly's book gives us, in an opulent collection of nearly a hundred fine plates preceded by five chapters of letterpress, one side of the artistic work of the South,—its bronzes, chiefly representing the gods and devotees of the Shaiva religion,—for the Shaiva religion has been as productive of sublime and suggestive work in the plastic arts as has been the Vaishnava all over India of great, profound and passionate poetry. This book is a sumptuous production and almost as perfect as any work of the kind can be in the present state of our knowledge.

There are certain minor defects which we feel bound to point out to the author. The

work abounds with useful quotations from unprinted Sanskrit works on the rules and conventions of the sculptural Art, works attributed to Agastya and others; but their value is somewhat lessened by the chaotic system of transliteration which Mr. Gangoly has adopted. He is writing for all India and Europe as well; why then adopt the Bengali solecism which neglects the distinction between the *b* and the *v* of the Sanskrit alphabet or that still more ugly and irrational freak by which some in Bengal insist on substituting for the aspirate *bh* the English *v*? Even in these errors the writer is not consistent; he represents the Sanskrit *v* sometimes by *b* and sometimes by *v*, and *bh* indifferently by *v*, *vh* or *bh*. Such vagaries are disconcerting and offend against the sense of order and accuracy. It is always difficult to read Sanskrit in the Roman alphabet which is entirely unsuited to that language, but this kind of system or want of system turns the difficulty almost into an impossibility. We hope that in the important works which he promises us on Pallava Sculpture and South

Indian Sculptures Mr. Gangoly will remedy this imperfection of detail.

The first chapter of the letterpress deals with the legendary origins of South Indian art. It is interesting and valuable, but there are some startlingly confident statements against which our critical sense protests. For instance, "it is *beyond doubt* that the two divisions of the country indicated by the Vindhya ranges were occupied by people essentially different in blood and temperament." Surely the important theories which hold the whole Indian race to be Dravidian in blood or, without assigning either an "Aryan" or "non-Aryan" origin, believe it to be homogeneous—omitting some islander types on the southern coast and the Mongoloid races of the Himalaya,—cannot be so lightly dismissed. The question is full of doubt and obscurity. The one thing that seems fairly established is that there were at least two types of culture in ancient India, the "Aryan" occupying the Punjab and Northern and Central India, Afghanistan and perhaps Persia and distinguished in its cult

by the symbols of the Sun, the Fire and the Soma sacrifice, and the un-Aryan occupying the East, South and West, the nature of which it is quite impossible to restore from the scattered hints which are all we possess.

Again we are astonished to observe that Mr. Gangoly seems to accept the traditional attribution of the so-called Agastya Shastras to the Vedic Rishi of that name. The quotations from these books are in classical Sanskrit of a fairly modern type, certainly later than the pre-Christian era though Mr. Gangoly on quite insufficient grounds puts them before Buddha. It is impossible to believe that they are the work of the Rishi, husband of Lopamudra, who composed the great body of hymns in an archaic tongue that close the first Mandala of the Rig Veda. Nor can we accept the astonishing identification of the Puranic Prajapati, Kashyapa, progenitor of creatures, with the father of the Kanada who founded the Vaisheshika philosophy. It distresses us to see Indian inquirers with their great opportunities simply following in the path of certain European

scholars, accepting and adding to their unstable fantasies, their huge superstructures founded on weak and scattered evidence and their imaginative "history" of our prehistoric ages. There is better and sounder work to be done and Indians can do it admirably as Mr. Gangoly himself has shown in this book; for the rest of the work, where he has not to indulge in these *obiter dicta*, is admirable and flawless. There is a sobriety and reserve, a solidity of statement and a sort of sparing exhaustiveness which make it quite the best work of the kind we have yet come across. The chapters on the Shilpashastra and the review of the distribution of Shaivite and other work in Southern India are extremely interesting and well-written and the last brief chapter of criticism is perfect both in what it says and what it refrains from saying.

Mr. Gangoly's collection of plates, 94 in number, illustrates Southern work in bronze in all its range. It opens with a fine Kalasamhara and a number of Dancing Shivas, the characteristic image of the Shaivite art, and contains a great variety of figures; there

are among them some beautiful images of famous Shaivite bhaktas. A few examples of Vaishnava art are also given. In a collection so ample and so representative it is obvious that there must be a good deal of work which falls considerably below the best, but the general impression is that of a mass of powerful, striking and inspired creations. And throughout there is that dominant note which distinguishes Indian art from any other whether of the Occident or of the Orient. All characteristic Oriental Art indeed seeks to go beyond the emotions and the senses; a Japanese landscape of snow and hill is as much an image of the soul as a Buddha or a flame-haired spirit of the thunderbolt. Nature will not see herself there as in a mirror, but rather herself transformed into something wonderfully not herself which is yet her own deeper reality. But still there is a difference, and it seems to lie in this that other Oriental Art, even though it goes beyond the external, usually remains in the cosmic, in the limits of Prakriti, but here there is a perpetual reaching beyond into something

absolute, infinite, supernatural, the very ecstasy of the Divine. Even in work not of the best finish or most living inspiration there is this touch which gives it a greatness beyond its actual achievement; rarely indeed does the statuary fall into mere technique or descend entirely into the physical and external.

It is this tendency, as the author well explains, which causes and in a sense justifies the recoil and incomprehension of the average Occidental mind; for it comes to Art with a demand for the satisfaction of the senses, the human emotions, the imagination moving among familiar things. It does not ask for a god or for a symbol of the beyond, but for a figure admirably done with scrupulous fidelity to Nature and the suggestion of some vision, imagination, feeling or idea well within the normal range of human experience.* The Indian artist deliberately ignores all these demands. His technique is perfect enough;

* This was the traditional standpoint, the view of Art dominant at the time of writing but, though it still survives, it is no longer dominant. Art and aesthetics in Europe have swung round to an opposite extreme.

he uses sculptural line with a consummate mastery, often with an incomparable charm, grace and tenderness. The rhythm and movement of his figures have a life and power and perfection which conveys a deeper reality than the more intellectualised and less purely intuitive symmetries and groupings of the European styles. But these bodies are not, when we look close at them, bronze representations of human flesh and human life, but forms of divine life, embodiments of the gods. The human type is exceeded, and if sometimes one more subtly and psychically beautiful replaces it, at other times all mere physical beauty is contemptuously disregarded.

What these artists strive always to express is the soul and those pure and absolute states of the mind and heart in which the soul manifests its essential being void of all that is petty, transient, disturbed and restless. In their human figures it is almost always devotion that is manifested; for this in the Shaiva and Vaishnava religions is the pure state of the soul turned towards God. The power of

the artist is extraordinary. Not only the face, the eyes, the pose but the whole body and every curve and every detail aid in the effect and seem to be concentrated into the essence of absolute adoration, submission, ecstasy, love, tenderness which is the Indian idea of *bhakti*. These are not figures of devotees, but of the very personality of devotion. Yet while the Indian mind is seized and penetrated to the very roots of its being by this living and embodied ecstasy, it is quite possible that the Occidental, not trained in the same spiritual culture, would miss almost entirely the meaning of the image and might only see a man praying.

The reason becomes evident when we study the images of the gods. These deities are far removed indeed from the Greek and the Christian conceptions; they do not live in the world at all, but in themselves, in the infinite. The form is, as it were, a wave in which the whole ocean of being expresses itself. The significance varies; sometimes it is unfathomable thought, sometimes the self-restraint of infinite power, sometimes the self-

contained oceanic surge of divine life and energy, sometimes the absolute immortal ecstasy. But always one has to look not at the form, but through and into it to see that which has seized and informed it. The appeal of this art is in fact to the human soul for communion with the divine Soul and not merely to the understanding, the imagination and the sensuous eye. It is a sacred and hieratic art, expressive of the profound thought of Indian philosophy and the deep passion of Indian worship. It seeks to render to the soul that can feel and the eye that can see the extreme values of the suprasensuous.

And yet there is a certain difference one notes which distinguishes most of these southern bronzes from the sublime and majestic stone sculptures of the earlier periods. It is the note of lyrism in the form, the motive of life, grace, rhythm. To use the terms of Indian philosophy, most art expresses the play of Prakriti; Buddhistic art in its most characteristic creations expresses the absolute repose of the Purusha; Hindu art tends to combine the Purusha and Prakriti

in one image. But in the earlier stone sculptures it is the sublime repose, tranquil power, majestic concentration of the Deity which the whole image principally represents even in poses expressive of violent movement; the movement is self-contained, subordinated to the repose. We find the same motive in some of these bronzes, notably in the wonderful majestically self-possessed thought and power of the Kalasamhara image of Shiva (Plate I); but for the most part it is life and rhythm that predominate in the form even when there is no actual suggestion of movement. This is the motive of the Natarajan, the Dancing Shiva, which seems to us to strike the dominant note of this art; the self-absorbed concentration, the motionless peace and joy are within, outside is the whole mad bliss of the cosmic movement. But even other figures that stand or sit seem often to represent only pauses of the dance; often the thought and repose are concentrated in the head and face, the body is quick with potential movement. This art seems to us to reflect in bronze the lyrical outburst of the Shaivite

and Vaishnava devotional literature while the older sculpture had the inspiration of the spiritual epos of the Buddha or else reflects in stone the sublimity of the Upanishads. The aim of a renascent Indian Art must be to recover the essence of these great motives and to add the freedom and variety of the soul's self-expression in the coming age when man's search after the Infinite need no longer be restricted to given types or led along one or two great paths, but may at last be suffered to answer with a joyous flexibility the many-sided call of the secret Mystery behind Life to its children.

III

"God, The Invisible King"

A remarkable book with this title by the well-known writer and thinker, Mr. H. G. Wells, has recently appeared, of which only a few extracts are before us, but these are sufficient to reveal its character and thought. It is on the part of the writer, speaking not for himself personally alone but as scribe to the spirit of his generation, a definite renunciation of the gospel of an all-sufficient rationalism, a discovery of God, a profession of faith in spirituality as the one lever by which mankind can rise out of the darkness and confusion of its present state into a more perfect living. He professes his faith in the God within, the invisible King, who is the immortal part of us, in a coming kingdom of God upon earth which shall not only be a spiritual state in the individual, but the open brotherhood of a divine rule among men, and in self-identification with God, service

of him, absolute surrender to him as the whole rule of life for the enlightened modern man. This is, indeed, a remarkable change of spirit and change of mental outlook and, if Mr. Wells' claim is just that he is writing as a scribe to the spirit of his generation, it means a revolution in Europe far more important than the Russian with all its idealism and its hopes for a new and beneficent change in politics and society. It means the union of Eastern spiritual knowledge and religious faith with Western pragmatic idealism and their fusion into the basis of a new culture and, we will not say a new universal religion,—for religion must vary with the variations of human nature,—but a new practical spirituality in which all mankind can become one.

There is much in Mr. Wells' statement of his new-born belief that is imperfect, limited and a little crude, much that is grasped with an overhasty zeal, as was inevitable in the first light of an unripe awakening. Some of the old limitations of the rationalistic Western mind with its too external outlook upon things still

cling about his new spiritual discovery. He tells us that the kingdom of God on earth is "not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project,...it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind." This classing of the inner spiritual state, the kingdom of God within us, with a metaphor, a dream, an uncertain project reveals the lingering taint of an excessive pragmatism. The spiritual state is the one thing indispensable; until the mass of mankind can awaken into it, the dream of a perfect society, an open brotherhood of God's rule, must end in failure and disappointment. The kingdom of God within is the sole possible foundation for the kingdom of God without; for it is the spirit by which man lives that conditions the outer forms of his life.

Misled by this external view of things Mr. Wells, evidently, still believes that a political and social action is sufficient to bring about the millennium. He has discovered that this action must be driven by a spiritual motive, pursued in the passion of a true religious fervour, consecrated to the

indwelling God, effective only by an absolute self-surrender to the Divine. But he has a limited vision of his God and brings to it all the aggressiveness and something of the fanaticism of all such limited religious conceptions. "The new conceptions", he writes, "do not tolerate either kings or aristocracies or democracies. Its implicit command to all its adherents is to make plain the way to the world theocracy. Its rule of life is the discovery and service of the will of God which dwells in the hearts of men and the performance of that will" in the life of the believer, the individual, and of the nation of which he is a part. "I give myself to God not only because I am so and so, but because I am mankind.... I become a knight in God's service ... I become a responsible minister of my king. I take sides against injustice, disorder, and against all those temporal kings, emperors, princes, landlords and owners who set themselves against God's rule and worship. Kings, owners and all who claim rule and decision in the world's affairs, must either show themselves clearly the fellow-servants

of the believer or become the object of his steadfast antagonism."

All this is very forcibly said, but it shows that the writer has not grasped the whole spiritual truth; he has not gone deep enough inward. As once he dreamed of a class of scientific and rational supermen establishing a perfect social rule upon earth, so now he thinks that by the action of his banded servants of the invisible King declaring political and social war upon godless Czars, Kaisers, rulers and capitalists the same end can be achieved. With them is God; in them God dwells, in the others, presumably, he does not dwell; those who have surrendered absolutely to him are the citizens of the kingdom and on them shall be peace; those who do not surrender or even fall short in their surrender, are interlopers, against them the sword. A very old kind of militant religionism in a very modern form. It ignores two ancient, two eternal spiritual truths; first, that God dwells in all and, secondly, that only by becoming conscious of the God within from within can humanity be saved. God dwells

in all and not only in the believer who is conscious of him,—dwells disguised and veiled, and it is by helping others to awaken to the veiled Divine within them that we go to the straight way to the founding of his kingdom on earth. True, an outward battle also has to be fought, but against institutions which stand in the way of the spreading of the light and the reign of brotherhood, not against men as unbelievers, — in a spirit of understanding, of knowledge, of firm will, but also of charity for ignorance and of love for the misled. God, says Mr. Wells, is boundless love, but this boundless love, it seems, is not infinite enough to embrace those who do not believe with you; it rejects them with a steadfast antagonism, it banishes them as "interlopers". God's work least of all should be pursued in a spirit of partisan and sectarian antagonism, but rather with a remembrance that the battle is only a way to peace and the peace must come by the inner submission of the opponent through his recognition of the Divine, through his awakening. It is not

enough that the believer should perform God's will and fight for the performance of that will "in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is a part". The nation also must be brought not only to believe, but to know, to see, to live in God, otherwise the national performance of God's will, even if momentarily secured, will soon degenerate into a form. It is possible that what the old religions called "the rule of the saints" may be a preliminary step to the establishment of the full kingdom of God, but that rule can only become secure by the light and fire which is in them kindling itself in the hearts of all mankind.

These defects of outlook come from a defect in the conception of the Divine. It consists of "complete Agnosticism in the matter of God the Creator and entire faith in the matter of God the Redeemer." A distinction is made between the Veiled Being behind the universe and the living reality in our lives; the latter alone is the true God. He is a personal and intimate God. He is finite. He is a spirit, a single spirit and a single

person. He has come, we know not whence, into the conflict of life. He has begun and will never end. And yet he is the immortal part and leader of mankind, our friend and brother and light of the world. And from these first principles is drawn a description of God as certain qualities, boundless love, boundless courage, boundless generosity, thought and steadfast will, and as having motives, characteristics, an aim. "This is the belief of the modern mind", read, the modern Western mind, "with regard to God."

We can see whence the crudities of this belief arise. The Western mind is still burdened with its scientific vision of the universe as a play of brute force, of life as a struggle, the world a material entity, and therefore of the Spirit of the world, if any there be, conceived agnostically or with a sort of materialistic Pantheism standing for these thing only, the Breath of a physical universe, a sort of mechanical, inconscient Soul of things. Out of this pure materiality mind and soul inexplicably evolve. God appears only in man and his aspiration, his longings

for a higher order of things, for love, universal sympathy, immortality. This God and the mechanical inconscient Spirit of the World the Western mind finds it difficult—and no wonder—to bring under the same term. The simple harmonious truth that God is veiled in the material universe which is only the lowest term, the first appearance of the cosmic Reality, that he unveils himself partially and progressively in man and to man, and that man by growth into self-knowledge and God-knowledge can grow into the whole truth of God and existence, which is one truth, — this seems still to be hidden from these wise men of the West. His partial unveiling in man seems to them a birth of the once non-existent Divine, a coming of God into the world, one knows not whence; and because man appears to be finite, God whom they conceive of as the sum of human aspiration to good, truth, beauty, immortality, is also conceived of as finite. But how is that which has begun in Time secure against ending in Time? and how can a finite God be infinite love, courage, strength? Only that

which was from ever, can be for ever, and only that which is infinite in being, can be infinite in force and quality. We have here an echo of the inconsequent Christian paradox of a soul born by the birth of the body, yet immortal to all eternity, combined with the metaphysical dogma of a God existent, not in being, but in becoming. There is an element of truth and value in this belief, but it brings disabling limitations into our inner realisation of God and the practice of a divine life to which it gives a foundation.

IV

"Rupam*"

The appearance of this superb quarterly admirable in its artistic get-up and its fine reproductions of Indian sculpture and painting, admirable in the accomplished excellence of its matter,—the name of the editor, Mr. O. C. Gangoly, the one man most especially fitted by his knowledge and capacity for this work, is of itself a sufficient guarantee of excellence,—is a significant indication of the progress that is being made in the revival of the aesthetic mind of India. Assailed and corrupted in a time of cultural decline and arrest of its creative and artistic faculty by an alien aesthesis and ideals antithetic to its own spirit, it is returning to a right view and understanding of its past greatness, and though much way has still to be made before there can be any universal recovery of the

* An illustrated quarterly journal of Oriental Art, chiefly Indian, edited by O. C. Gangoly.

artistic eye and taste, the first steps have been taken with some rapidity and firmness and are all in the right direction. This new and fine effort of the Indian Society of Oriental Arts is likely to be of invaluable aid towards this reawakening; its magnificent illustrations are in themselves a revelation of the old beauty and greatness and, admirably selected and supported by illuminating articles, ought to be sufficient to open even the most blinded vision to the meaning and value of our ancient painting and sculpture.

The subjects of the four articles in this number are all of a considerable interest and touch points or raise and answer questions which have either a central importance or a vital though second-plane prominence in Indian art, and each article is a remarkably just, full, efficient and understanding interpretation of its subject. The frontispiece is a panel from a Pallava temple at Mahabalipuram intended to convey at once the essential character and appeal of Indian sculpture by an example which offers no difficulty of understanding or appreciation even to a non-

Indian mind or to an uninstructed knowledge, and it is accompanied by a brief but clear and sufficient article. This example from one of the great styles and periods shows, as is justly said, and shows very perfectly, the Indian principle in the treatment of the human figure, the suppression of small particulars and trivial details in order to secure an extreme simplicity of form and contour,—the best condition for accomplishing the principal object of the Indian sculptor which was to fill the form with the utmost power of spiritual force and significance. The figure of this princely doorkeeper of the temple in its union of calm, grave, sweet and restful serenity with a latent and restrained heroic energy in its stillness, noted by the writer as the distinctive power of this creation, is indeed equal, as he suggests, in its dignity and repose to any Greek statue, but it carries in it a more profound and potent meaning; it is a perfect interpretation of the still and intense Godward feeling, seized in one deep mood, in one fixed moment of it, which was the soul of the great ages of Indian

religion. There is here a perfection of form with a perfection of significance. This restraint in power, this contained fullness opening an amplitude of infinite suggestion, is not rare or exceptional, it is a frequent greatness in the art of India.

The second article on Garuda in Bengal and Java by Akshaya Kumar Maitreya, besides its interesting and discerning treatment of its subject, the inception and humanising of the Garuda figure and the artistic use of the mythus, touches an issue which has not yet, I think, received sufficient consideration, the place of the art of Gauda in the development of the spirit of Indian sculpture. The putting side by side of the two sculptures from Java and Varendra, on one side the heroic force, majesty, dignity and beauty of the ancient art in one of its finest developments, on the other the moved nobility, grace and loveliness and the fervour of spiritual emotion and tenderness of a time when the antique Aryan spirit was softening into the sweetness of the religions of bhakti, makes of itself an illuminating suggestion.

This sculpture is eloquent of that transition and the art of Gauda with its lyrical sweetness of emotion and, at its best, suggestive depths, begins the curve of the stream of spiritual feeling which came down through the Vaishnava art and poetry, found its most gracious and lucid embodiment in the poets of Bengal, has now taken, enriched by new elements, a large and living development in the lyrics of Tagore and the paintings of the Calcutta school and has yet a vital part to play in the spiritual future of India.

Another article contains a full and discriminating account, copiously illustrated by numerous figures, of the history of the Kirtimukha, a standing feature in Indian architecture, and the development of its use as a constant decorative element and in Java a prominent structural motive. The right understanding of these details is a necessary equipment for the complete comprehension of the art of India. The writer handles his subject with a consummate mastery and includes in a small compass all that is needed

to give us a full idea about this "glory face". The one thing not included in his intention is its psychological significance, a question of great interest, for it is an evolution as the writer indicates from an element common to the ancient art of Asia and there were kindred things in Greece and mediaeval Europe. It is the result, I would suggest, of an imagination or an experience that has entered into the subtle worlds and found there a side of things dangerous and distorted and terrible that have yet to be compelled by the adventure of the self-conquering spirit into an element of divine harmony and significance.

The remaining article by Mr. E. Vredenburg on the continuity of pictorial tradition in the art of India treats a question of the most central importance and brings to it a fine aesthetic instinct even more necessary than historic and archaeological accuracy of information in such a discussion, for one may have the latter and yet miss the truth for lack of a more essential equipment of the art critic. Mr. Vredenburg enters a still

much-needed protest against the constant tendency to attribute a foreign origin to whatever survives of Indian creation. The instances he gives are indeed evidences of an extraordinary perversity of judgment, such as the well-known refusal to leave the credit of the Tajmahal to India, "the numerous attempts that have been made to ascribe the Ajanta paintings to the Greeks, Persians or Chinese," and last but not least colosally absurd, "the truly astounding statement that the Kangra paintings are of European inspiration and that they were painted for the English market!" Only yesterday while reading Mr. Jouveau-Dubreuil's able historical monograph I found myself brought up short by the sweepingly positive but hardly judicial and certainly not judicious statement that "the Deccan like the North was inspired by the Greek and Roman arts and the marbles of Amaravati can be compared to the sculptures of Gandhara". The plain fact is that whatever outside influences there may or may not have been in India as elsewhere, even the

earliest work shows a characteristic Indian mentality and touch; and as for Gandharan art, it has the air of an inefficient attempt of the Hellenistic mind to absorb this spirit rather than an effort of India to imitate Greece. And in any case the great characteristic work could no more have been the creation of a foreign mind or of its influence than the sculptures of Phidias can be attributed to an Assyrian, Egyptian or Chinese origin. A psychological insensibility to the spiritual significance of Indian work is probably at the root of these errors and, so long as that subsists, the most erudite knowledge will be no protection against gross misunderstandings.

Mr. Vredenburg is chiefly concerned in this article with filling up the gap between the Ajanta frescoes and the later art of India. He is able to do this up to the eleventh or twelfth century: for the beautiful coloured reproductions of exquisite Buddhist miniatures from an illuminated manuscript of that period which are the most attractive feature of this number, evidence a complete

continuity of the Ajanta style. Most striking are the two enlargements which show at once and conclusively that these miniatures are in their whole spirit, method and every characteristic reductions of the old style of mural painting. He appeals also to the typically Ajantesque character of the coloured panels of Man Singh's palace which date from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It will be interesting to follow the farther development of this argument in the forthcoming number.

I could wish I had space for adequate comment on the many points of stimulating interest with which this number abounds, but I have, I think, indicated enough to show that every lover of Indian art and culture ought to possess " Rupam". He will find it one of the luxuries that are necessities.

V

About Astrology*

The subject of this book is one which stands nowadays put away under a sort of intellectual ban, placed on it some centuries ago by the scientific and rationalistic European mind and not yet lifted. Mr. N. P. Subramania Iyer has undertaken an astrological series which will deal with the various parts of astrology, and the present volume contains the text and translation of the Kalaprakasika, a treatise on the selection of the right times by astrological rule for undertaking any and every action of human life. The book is well printed and got up, the translation admirably done in a style free enough to avoid all awkwardness, — the author has a thorough control of the English tongue and an excellent style of his own,— but perfectly faithful to the matter of the

* Kalaprakasika : the Standard Book on the Election System : by N. P. Subramaniya Iyer, Tanjore.

text. But the most interesting part of the work for the ordinary reader is the introduction, in which he gives amidst other matter the psychological explanation of the influence of the planets and states for what they stand in relation to the Indian Vedantic philosophy of existence. I have not seen elsewhere any exposition of the subject equally original and illuminative.

Astrology is in the general mind associated with that class of subjects which goes under the name of the occult, and along with others of its class it has long been discredited by modern "enlightenment", one does not quite know on what grounds or with what rational justification. It has its psychic and mystical side, but that is not its ordinary presentation; there it claims to be a science like any other with fixed processes and an exact and definite system of rules which ought to be perfectly capable of verification or of disproof by experiment and induction like any other science. Its basis is astronomical and mathematical, its data perfectly open and positive and in no way hidden or

occult, nor does it at all shrink back from the test or hide itself in secrecy and mystery. It does not indeed give ordinarily the why, but only the how of the causes and effects it professes to establish, but so it is with all other sciences; they do not give the reason of things, but only their processes. Yet astrology is supposed at some indefinite time in the march of human mind to have been exploded,—along with such things as witch-craft and demonology, not to speak of the existence of spirits and the immortality of the soul,—and there is a sort of idea that it has been disproved and therefore put aside as a superstition which no reasonable man can even look at except with a lofty disdain, much less stoop to investigate with an open mind its truth or falsity. Still the anathema of Science has not been able to destroy it; in Europe it has revived, even though its practice as a profession is punishable by the law, and in India it has always survived. It is not indeed the habit of educated Indians to profess explicitly their belief in it, they fight shy of that as a rule, but it is largely consulted

by numbers of them, as also by many Europeans. This is an anomalous position which ought to be corrected. Either astrology is a true science and should be investigated, proved, improved where defective and generally rehabilitated in opinion, or else it is a pseudo-science and should be investigated and disproved so as to cut the ground away finally from all secret belief or open credulity.

As a matter of fact astrology has never been scientifically disproved, nor has any rational ground ever been advanced for treating it as a pseudo-science. It simply came to be assumed at a certain period and under certain intellectual influences that it was a childish superstition. Or if there were any grounds, then it was left aside because astrologers were charlatans, because many, perhaps most predictions went wrong, but most of all because it was thought that in the nature of things, in any rational theory of the universe the planets simply could not have any influence on our characters, lives and actions. None of those grounds are sufficient. If many astrologers are char-

latans, so also have there been many quacks in the field of medicine; at one time indeed not only did they pullulate; but the system of medicine itself seemed so defective that there were plenty of clear and enlightened minds who were inclined with Moliere to denounce the whole thing as a gross pseudo-science, an elaborate and solemn system of ignorance, humbug and quackery. Supposing that view had prevailed,—it could not, merely because men are too vitally interested in healing their ailments and preserving their bodies and know no other way of doing it,—that would not have done away with the truth underlying the science.

That many predictions go wrong, proves nothing essentially, against astrology any more than the constant failure of doctors to heal diseases proves anything essential against their science. The first reason of this failure may be that a great number of practising astrologers are either charlatans who seek to please their clients rather than predict by scientific rule,—of that kind there are perhaps many,—or else inefficient and

ignorant men who practise only by rule of thumb, perfunctorily and with a main eye upon their fees. But if even capable astrologers fail often, that also only proves that either the science or their way of treating it is largely empirical or that some of its rules and theories may be errors. But every science has to pass through its empirical stage and some—as, again, the science of medicine, —have hardly emerged from it, and every science too burdens itself in its progress with false generalisations, incorrect theories and imperfect rules which have afterwards to be discarded or amended. As the main point in medicine is whether herbs and metals and other remedies have or have not certain effects on the body and whether their workings can be substantiated by experience in a sufficient number of cases to establish a regular relation of cause and effect, so it is in astrology with the fundamental question of planetary influences upon earth and its creatures.

The *a priori* argument from the rational theory of the universe cannot stand. There is

nothing essentially irrational in the idea that in this solar system, so closely linked together, there may be mutual influences of all the planets upon each other or that the beings of a particular planet are powerfully influenced or even dominated by influences from the others. The question remains, the *a priori* rationality being admitted or at least not summarily dismissed, first, whether it is so in fact and, secondly, how far those influences go and of what nature they are. Astrology affirms that they not only affect our bodies, but also our psychical being. If matter and mind were entirely independent entities having no influence or determining effect upon each other, then such a result could not be; but that is not the case. According to the materialistic view of the universe which claims to be the sole rationalistic view, mind is itself an effect of matter and all its states and movements are determined by matter. There is nothing then impossible, planetary influence being once admitted, in the action of material bodies producing psychical conditions on the earth and thereby determining

our psychical states and movements. In a more truly rationalistic view mind and matter are always influencing and determining each other; here too, given a universal mind and matter so acting upon individual matter and mind, the movements of the planetary system may be one or even the first nodus of their activities, and the assertions of astrology become at least primarily credible.

Farther, astrology affirms that these influences determine the whole course of our lives and that the all-important element is time. That raises the major question of the influence of Time upon human beings and events; does Time determine the course of our lives and the states of our being and if so, how far and in what way? Or to put the question more precisely, as it is raised by astrology, do or can the conditions reigning at a given critical time, in this case the moment of birth, determine our physical and psychological conditions and the whole course of our future lives, or determine them to any considerable extent? and are the

relative movements and therefore the mutual positions of the sun and planets with regard to the earth and each other either the nodus or in some way the effective signs of these determinations? And, secondly, do the developing time conditions which come afterwards, by themselves or viewed in reference to the original conditions, determine from moment to moment, from time to time the subsequent evolution of our primary physical and psychological conditions and the course of linked and successive circumstances which make up the history of our lives? and if so, again, are the relative movements and mutual positions of the suns and planets at any given time the nodus or the effective signs of this later determination also? can they therefore be taken for all practical purposes as determinants, or at any rate as sure signs by which the determinations of our life and being can be discovered? That is the question which astrology raises, and it is evidently a perfectly legitimate and rational question: nor can we on *a priori* grounds condemn and put away an affirmative answer, which is

based upon past experience systematised into rules and theories, as a superstition or a childish folly. Granted that in things here there is a chain of cause and effect—or at least, if causality is disputed, of antecedent condition leading up to subsequent condition —and that if and so far as we know that chain, scientific prediction becomes in that proportion possible,—two propositions which, unless we deny determination altogether, it would be difficult to dispute,—there is no inherent improbability in the clue to happenings human and other on the planets being found in the motions of those planets. Astronomy is in a sense the primary physical science, for the first facts which give all the others their field are astronomical facts; it may well be that in the psycho-physical field the same rule holds and that there the first facts may be astrological.

The *a priori* objections disappearing, the next step is to ask ourselves whether there is a sufficient *prima facie* empirical case for inquiring into the actual truth of astrology. This at present depends upon the experience

of isolated individuals, a very unsatisfactory basis. But if this experience could be collected, sifted and published, I believe it would be found that a formidable *prima facie* case exists in favour of astrology, much stronger than that which encouraged the Society for Psychical Research to carry on its work in another psycho-physical field to such important conclusions. I may state my own experience in the matter in the belief, justified by many instances, that it is only typical of the experience of hundreds of others. My first accidental contact with an Indian astrologer was not encouraging. This gentleman was the most accomplished thought-reader I have ever seen; for he asked me to think my question without speaking it and not only successfully named the unspoken question I had fixed on, but three others which had crossed my mind, one of them only in the merest flash and without leaving any impression behind: this he pretended to do by mathematical calculation, an operation which I took leave to regard as humbug or professional parade. For when it came to his answers, I found

that he was still doing thought-reading and not astrology; he simply echoed the hopes or thoughts in my mind and his predictions did not come within one hundred miles of the truth. Other practitioners I have found to belong, a few plainly to the class of mere flattering charlatans, but most to the inefficient who read by rule of thumb and have made no profound study of their science. On the other hand, with capable astrologers the results have been often of such a remarkable accuracy as to put quite aside any possibility of chance hit, mere coincidence, intelligent prevision or any of the current explanations. I may instance the father of a friend of mine, a deep student of the science but not a professional, who predicted accurately the exact year, month, day, hour and even minute of his own death. In my own case accuracy was hampered by the inability to fix the precise moment of my birth; still some of the results were extraordinary. Two may be mentioned, from one and the same astrologer, which related to my public career. One, given when I had not

yet plunged into the political vortex and my then obscure personality was quite unknown to the astrologer, predicted as an inevitable certitude of the future a political struggle with powerful non-Indian adversaries during which for a time even my life would fall under the shadow of danger. The other, given at the time of my first prosecution in the *Bande Mataram* case, predicted three successive criminal trials in each of which the prosecution would fail. I may instance also two predictions by the book in which slokas from Sanskrit astrological writings indicating the results of certain conjunctions or planetary positions were shown to be applicable to my horoscope. One foretold specific chronic illnesses for the body of which there was no sign at the time, but long afterwards they put in their unexpected appearance and persisted. Another indicated very precisely that one of my future activities would be to found a new spiritual philosophy and its discipline; at that time I had no knowledge of philosophy or Yoga and no turn or inclination in my mind which could

make the realisation of this prediction at all probable. These are only the most precise examples out of a number. Supposing all well-authenticated evidence of the kind to be collected, I am convinced there would be an overwhelmingly strong *prima facie* case and even a body of sufficiently strong empirical proof to establish at least a nucleus of truth in astrology.

That would be the first step. For if astrology is a science and is to take its proper place, the first necessity is to dissipate by an appeal to the empirical mind of the general public as well as of the sceptical thinker the great mass of unenquiring prejudice which now exists against it. To publish the text and translation of the best authorities, as Mr. Iyer is now doing, with illuminating introductions is a preliminary need in this case so that we may know what we have to go upon. The second is to mass evidence of the empirical truth of the science, giving in each case the prediction in all its details, the more detailed the better, the astrological rules on which it was based and the event,

each detail of the event being compared with the corresponding detail of the prediction. Only then would there be a clear field for the consideration of the scientific and philosophical doubts, questions and problems which would still arise ; but this, though the most important aspect of the matter, I must leave for future handling.

An acceptance of the truth of astrology would not necessarily carry with it a complete determinism of Fate or mechanical law of Karma. In the Indian theory at least there is room for a determination by human will and endeavour, for Fate is mainly a determination by past action and a new will and action can cancel it; only a very strong Karma is imperative and irreducible. Even that may possibly be cancelled if one can enter into the freedom of the spiritual consciousness. One instance at any rate came to my knowledge in which the life had corresponded exactly with the pre-indications of the horoscope so long as the subject remained in the world but, as soon as he left it for a spiritual life, there was no longer any correspondence.